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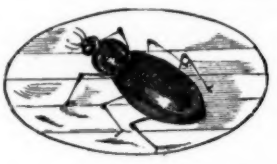

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AB-O'-TH'-YATE ON LIFE INSURANCE

(From "Ab-o'-th'-Yate's Life Policy.")

(Continued from our last.)

But all doubt was not to be set aside at once. The money was of the true mint: that was as certain as that the pieces were round, and bright, and shingly. But how had it been come by? That was a question that forced itself upon Ab's mind with most unwelcome intrusion; and his countenance fell, for a dark suspicion had got fast hold of him.

Putting back the coin, as if he felt it to be too hot for pleasant handling, and flinging stocking and all upon the table, the poor fellow turned upon his wife a look so expressive of mistrust, that it pierced the darkness like a phosphorescent emanation.

"I awlus thowt theau're honest, an' I want to think so eendway," he said, with a nervous utterance; "but there's so much thievin' gooin' on neaw-a-days, that one hardly knows whoa to trust. *Theau's* no' bin robbin' somebody, hasta?"

"Is *that* a question for a husband to put to his wife, after they'n browt up a family o' childer, witheaut ever as mich as a bit of a deawt comin' between 'em? Ab, bethink thysel' what theau'rt sayin'. That brass is th' savin's o' th' last ten years—saved, whether or not, when I could ha' done with it layin' eaut on my back, an' theau met ha' worn shoon i'stead o' clogs, an' met ha' had mony a little comfort beside. That brass has bin honestly getten, honestly saved, an' honestly I give it up to thee." Saying which, Sarah re-lighted the candle, and its rays were thrown back from her husband's face, as if that uneven surface had suddenly been transformed into a reflector of the finest polish; and the scene of that cottage fireside grew into one of substantial and unclouded brightness.

"An' o this brass is eaur own—honestly come by, an' owes nob'dy nowt?" exclaimed the happy fellow, relinquishing his hold of two armful of blue-printed bedgown, which in his ecstacy he had rumpled into a thousand tell-tale creases.

"O eaur own, Ab," was the sweet and assuring response.

"An' I con ha' shoon for Sundays?"

"Ay; for ther'll be plenty laft after theau's paid thy insurance."

"Then farewell, timber!" said Ab, flinging his clogs into the nook, and throwing up his heels, as if some unseen power was working them with strings. "If I'd that monkey here neaw ut o'er-doanced me i' Lunnon, I' d warm it its jacket afore I'd be conquered again. Stond furr, owd craythe r! an' I'll have a fly reaund th' heause afore th' childer come'n in, or else they'n think its Crazy Tummy' come back, or 'Lolloper,' ut doanced through his stockin' feet at one twell, becose nob'dy axt him to give o'er. Does theau want a turn, too? Come on, then, owd chest-o'-drawers! See at thy garters are firm, an' blaze away! Too-dy-iddle-toddle-foddle, too-dy-iddle-toddle-foddle," and away they went at "Jack's the Lad,"—Ab skipping about like a scalded cock, and his "rib" doing a "set" on the hearthstone, that made the very fire almost go into fits with laughing.

Sobered with hard work, the exhausted but happy couple sat themselves down in their respective chairs, and the question of *insurance* was resumed at the point where it had been so suddenly dropped.

"Neaw, then, Sarah," said Ab, panting like a racer, from over exertion, "what abeaut this buyin' me a new life? Heaw mich brass will it tak'?"

(To be continued.)

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By T. G. G.

AB O'-TH'-YATE AND THE LIVERPOOL GENTLEMEN.

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[RAMBLES IN LAKELAND.]

DERWENTWATER.

BY A LADY.

LET no tourist in the Lake district, whatever else he may leave undone, fail to walk or drive from Dunmail Raise to Keswick. We mounted the coach on a day when September seemed to have stolen a leaf from April, the tears being as full and warm, and the smiles as bright, as in that flowery month. These mild, hysterical paroxysms occurred, for once, exactly at the right time and place, and produced charming effects. The distance between the high ridge already mentioned and the town of Keswick is about eight miles and a half, and offers manifold beauties and perpetual change, for wood and rock, hill and dale, mountain and fell, with many a silver stream, are here combined with rare felicity. There is Steel Fell on our left, whilst Helvellyn, jealously hid by inferior potentates, may now and then be seen through the hills. Presently we reach a lake, now black with wind and rain, now all smiles and dimples. This is Thirlmere, above which Eagle Crag waves its long black plumes. Like many other pleasant things, each special loveliness passes away too soon, for the road is level and the team fresh, and we swing along at a hand-gollop.

"That is the Vale of St. John, is it, coachman? Well, then, pull up, for we must get down here, and walk the ground that Scott has made classic." The lane branches off the main road, from whence a few minutes' walk brought us under Castle Crag. To anyone not familiar with *The Bridal of Triermain* this celebrated rock would be a fantastic mass, and nothing more; but to those acquainted with this *chef d'œuvre* of Scott it has a larger interest, derived more from fancy than fact, more from poesy than geology. The days of magic spell and lore are passed; no band of maidens appeared to bid us welcome; neither wine nor minstrelsy were there to cheer us; so we passed unchallenged and untempted for two or three miles further up the vale, which is very beautiful, the beauty, however, diminishing in ratio of the distance from the main road. Crossing a wooden bridge on our return we regained the coach-road, after a charming stroll immediately above the bright river that flows into the glen. At this point we were about four miles from Keswick, and were obliged to content ourselves with mere moss and mountain till we reached the summit of Castlerig, when we came into sight of the fairest of English lakes. How glorious is the view a few yards below the turnpike. To the south-west lies Derwentwater, with its wooded islands, each a jewel of beauty, its margin clothed with many coloured woods, and its magnificent array of mountains of every shade and shape of heauty. To the north-west Bassenthwaite glimmers through the trees, whilst close to the right rises Skiddaw, a queenly beauty, at once so fair, delicate, and grand, her grassy sides here and there draped with small patches of the rosiest heather, whilst at its feet lay the town, whose green slate roofs looked all the greener for the sunshine and the rain.

If Windermere deserves the title of Queen of the Lakes, Keswick should be crowned the Queen of the Lake Country, not so much for itself as its surroundings. Not only is she the centre and starting point of more rides, rambles, and drives than any other place in Lakeland, but these are more varied and beautiful. Any attempt to describe them *seriatim* would require far more space than I possess. I must, therefore, sketch them with a few sharp lines as best I may. Assuming eight or nine miles a day sufficient for a lady's power and pastime, we will first visit as many of the nearest notabilia as can be arranged within that limit.

Ten minutes' walk over a pleasant road brings us to the little bay where the flotilla lies at anchor. Queen Keswick, however, possesses a much smaller navy than her imperial sister of Windermere. Still we were soon able to charter a vessel, and at once pushed off. The constant variety in Lakeland is one of its greatest charms. An hour before, from the summit of Castlerig, we saw the length and breadth of this lovely mere, and deemed we had seen it; but now all was new, and the beauties of water and mainland showed under a different, and perhaps more pleasing, aspect. Derwent Island, Lord's Island, St. Herbert's, looked surpassingly lovely; Catbells, Red Pike, and a host of mountain peaks, and dales, and vales, some in sunshine, some in shade, rose in sweet confusion round. We half thought at one time of making a catalogue of them, but speedily abandoned the idea in hopeless confusion, and in blissful ignorance of local geography, whiled away a delicious hour on beautiful Derwentwater. From the landing place to Castle Crag is only a few hundred yards. You wind up a steep and wooded ascent, and then reach a small rocky platform above the trees, from whence a matchless panorama unfolds itself.

Once more on the Ambleside road we mount the long hill to the eastward of the town, and just where the line dips into the opposite valley, turn to the left along a lane, the walls of which show it to be centuries old, and so we reach an upland pasture that has never known the plough, where stands the Druids' mystic circle. Here again is another gorgeous panorama, painted in a breadth and tone never seen on artists' canvass. The place itself is full of suggestiveness; the surrounding landscape full of beauty. Yonder is Skiddaw in a new aspect; there is Saddleback scarceley less lofty or less grand, the rocky summits of the range above the vale of St. John, the valley of Thirlmere, Eagle Crag, and the heights of Watendlath completing the picture. Where else than near Keswick could so much beauty be found in a space so short.

These are some of the shorter strolls. Of longer walks extending out and home from six to nine miles a dozen might be mentioned, but before glancing at these generally we will speak of one more particularly. The night had been wet and stormy, and during the earlier part of the morning heavy squalls of wind and rain seemed determined to keep us at home for the day, but about noon the weather cleared, and at one we started for Watendlath. Availing ourselves of the Lodore omnibus, we drove to Barrow, something more than two miles from the town, and passing through a gate on the left of the road, at once found ourselves in a bridle path, leading upwards and onwards over wood and fell. After a long ascent a sudden turn in the path brought us full in view of as sweet an Alpine valley as foot of tourist ever trod, where a long, level strip of vivid green was closely hemmed in on either side by bare precipitous crags, of great height and boldness of outline. Within a foot of the path ran a broad mountain stream, whose guidance we followed till we reached a solitary mountain farm, a few cottages, and the circular basin of Watendlath Tarn. Here we crossed a ford, and soon found ourselves on the summit of the mountain over-looking the varied loveliness of Borrowdale. If the ascent had been steep, the descent was steeper, and it was with no little satisfaciton we found ourselves on the level road leading back by Grange to the Borrowdale hotel, where, meeting an omnibus, we drove triumphantly home after an eight or nine miles' walk of extraordinary beauty.

There is so much to be seen in the neighbourhood of Keswick that it is impossible here to do justice to any single excursion. We trust that many of our readers will hereafter take these at their leisure; meanwhile we will briefly indicate for their guidance a few walks of moderate length which may be taken with advantage. From Keswick to Grange and back is about seven miles, and almost every step discloses some fresh object of interest. Nearly the whole of this distance the road skirts the eastern margin of the lake. The water breaks musically on the pebbles, and above are mountain ranges "bearing all shapes, and taking many names." Here also are two waterfalls of no mean repute in Cumberland—Barrow and Lodore. We were fortunate in seeing them after heavy rains. Each have their admirers, and both are beautiful; we, however, were unanimous in giving our verdict in favour of the former.

Then, there is the western side of the lake opposite Greta Bridge, the modest dwelling where a poet of questionable merit wrote Thalaba, and a prose writer of unquestionable excellence penned the life of Nelson. A few hundred yards below stands a white-washed village church, where their author lies and where the stranger may see the simplest and

grandest monument perhaps in the kingdom. It is well to be reminded of such things now and then, else here one might be apt to forget them where everything smacks of lusty life, of joy, and brightness. But we must not pause to moralise. Here is Portinscale with its handsome hotels, there the Catbells with their grassy walks, and, above all, are the fells, where, in these early days of September, many a glossy black cock falls before the fowler's gun.

But enough of walks. Shall we say anything of the rides in this charming neighbourhood? The subject is too wide to enter on, but we have just space left to mount our ponies and trot slowly along the western shores of Bassenthwaite. For some unaccountable reason this lake seems to be avoided by common consent. There is no reason for this capricious conduct on the part of the public; on the contrary, we know nothing better worth seeing in Lakeland. The ride from the Swan, immediately over which towers the stony mountain of Barf, to the Pheasant at the north-west extremity of the lake, is beautiful. Near the latter hostelry is a low wooded hill, topped with a tableland of about half an acre. This was once a Roman outpost, one of a chain of forts extending along the great north road. No centurion now judges the martial games of the legionaries, but stout Cumberland yeomen still sit on those rustic benches at the southern side of the area, and bestow the prize on the best wrestler on the green.

Of Borrowdale, Buttermere, Crummock, Honister Crag, and Styhead Pass we must be silent here. Nor must we attempt the ascent of Skiddaw, though he lies so near at hand. Such a mountain monarch requires a history of his own. His is a wide and fair domain, on which we dare not enter, for the evening is falling, the clouds are dropping asleep on his lofty crest, and we are weary, yet not too weary to bid our readers good night, and chant an evening hymn as we ride home on our quiet ponies to our peaceful cottage on the eastern outskirts of the town.

THE PICTURES AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION.

3.—LANDSCAPES.

IT is a painful and irksome task that of criticising adversely, but we are compelled to say that the Landscapes at the Royal Institution, numerous as they are, are with a few exceptions, without any special claim to excellence, or even originality. There seems a kind of blight on Landscape Art at present, and just as the Landscapes in the Royal Academy are inferior, generally, in merit to the paintings of other classes, so it is in an equal ratio with the pictures in this year's Exhibition in Mosley-street, which, considering the opinion we have already expressed concerning the figure paintings, and the fact that it is easier to produce an average landscape than an average genre picture, will, no doubt, be looked upon as a severe generalization. Still it is useless attempting to ignore what is a fact, that out of the multitude of Landscapes under notice there is a terrible majority of—to put it gently—incomplete work, work admirable if that of an amateur, but showing no signs of such careful study as one would expect in the works of the youngest of professional painters. In the majority of cases there is visible the influence of established artists (none of them of the highest artistic eminence however), and their mannerisms and faults are copied admirably always, their good qualities seldom, if ever. There must be some reason for this, but it is hard to find out; perhaps the same reason that drives some artists to repeat themselves everlastingly is at work, and sheer necessity and the ignorance of others forces them from thinking for themselves, and makes them in spite of themselves, the weak, incoherent echo of other men's voices.

For the sake of simplicity we will divide the landscapes this year into two classes, poetical and realistic. Of the first the most beautiful, indeed a most beautiful landscape anywhere, is (498) by A. Legros. If English landscape painters want one quality more than another it is the quality of "poetry," and they could not have a better lesson than this picture. Of subject there is little or none—a quiet stream, a grey green bank of broken ground partly covered with trees, a blue and white sky, and for incident (that "incident" so dear to modern landscape painters) a punt rowed by two men in their shirt sleeves, with two men in black sitting in the stern: the scheme of colour, olive, green, blue, white, brown, and black; the composition hardly worth the name, so easily do the different forms fall into the right places and so simple is the arrangements of point of colour; while the drawing, which is hardly more than suggested in the background, is correct in suggestion, and—as in the place where the water is moved by the bow of the punt—most accurate, though the means by which the motion is conveyed is scarcely to be discovered; for there are no lines anywhere. It is by its correctness without obtrusiveness, its simplicity without carelessness, and its perfect unity of tone and colour, that it is without exception the grandest and most poetical Landscape in the whole Exhibition.

Mr. Legros' picture is poetical, but there is true and false poetry in Landscape art, and Mr. Clarence Whaite, who aims always at poetry, hovers nearer to the false than the true in his picture, The Pearl Fishery (507). The only way in which any given scene can be endued with true poetry, is to paint it under such circumstances as are most usually existent with it, extracting everything likely to unpoeticize, and adding nothing extraneous. But in this picture Mr. Whaite has painted a mountainous coast with an almost unruffled sea, and the shore and hills are enveloped in a whirl of mist and cloud hardly ever seen except in bad weather on the highest mountain ranges. So far, by painting an abnormal effect, he has failed in producing a true poetical picture; though many parts are most admirably drawn and arranged. In The Crown of the Year (93) there is little we have not seen before, and the theme is unworthy of the labour bestowed upon it. No class of Landscape could be more unsuited to Mr. Whaite's manner of painting. He has persevered long in the attempt to realize severely, and at the same time poetically, what cannot be more than suggested in a sketch. That the experience he has obtained from the many pictures of this class he has painted should be great, is certain, and it is time now that he should turn to some more paintable subjects, in which case, with his long and careful study, he ought to bring forth work that would be not only delightfully poetical but what is much more—monumental.

A very excellently poetical picture is (45) by A. Hayward, which has no title, and which the lines attached in the catalogue hardly explain. A swampy piece of ground thickly overgrown with underwood, and with some carefully drawn silver birches crossing the twilight sky, is the subject. For its success as a picture it depends upon beautiful colour and tone, graceful drawing, and extreme repose. It is not a great picture by any means, but as far as it goes it is successful. Had the owl been white, however, it would have been better; being brown it hardly explains itself sufficiently.

Unless we class W. Linnell's painting, An Earthquake in Calabria, (140) as a poetical picture it would be difficult to find it a place It certainly cannot be called realistic. How an artist could ever choose an earthquake as a subject for a picture, especially a landscape, is a mystery; but it will be enough to say, in this case, that the picture is quite unreal, devoid of invention, and extremely bad in colour and painting. This being the last of the poetic pictures we shall mention, it is a pleasure to turn to H. Moore's "Every Cloud Hath its Silver Lining," (58) as being the best of the realistic landscapes in the rooms. Owing to the dry manner in which it is painted it suffers somewhat by juxtaposition with varnished works; but is most beautiful in conception and the composition and colour are very charming. It is hung almost too high for the great subtlety of drawing in the smaller portions to be fairly seen, but in the large cloud forms and principal trees it is visible enough. The subject is common-place, and would be passed by many of our painters; yet the simplest materials have furnished the two best landscapes in this Exhibition: Mr. Legros in the "poetical" class a picture on the one hand, and Mr. Moore in the "realistic," on the other.

Mr. Wyllie's picture, London from the Monument, (455) is capital. The mass of roofs and chimneys veiled with white smoke, under a grey light, are most cleverly painted, and the subject and treatment quite original.

We should like to know why an artist like A. Vertunni should be so far favoured as to have five large pictures hung; surely not on account of their merit, for they are for the most part coarse, and of a common-place style of painting which it is undesirable to see much of. The Sea Shore at Porte d' Angio (457), about his largest picture, is very cheap work, not very far beyond scene painting. There does not seem the least attempt for subtlety; it is clever, and coarse, and nothing more.

BRITISH MUSEUM

In the water colour room are several small drawings of considerable merit, among which are two by C. Earle (302) and (248), both very careful in painting and pleasing in colour, and well managed as to composition. There is also an alarming sunset by B. Warren (294), which successfully kills all the pictures in its neighbourhood; while his other drawing, the Path through the Wood (269), is the old story of beech trees, with gleams of light flashing through them. Specially indicating Gloaming, (239) by W. P. Burton, as a very delightful little drawing, we shall conclude this notice, saying that, of course, there are many Landscapes of average merit that we have not mentioned—in most cases because there is nothing new to be said of them. They are the same coasts, rocks, moors, or mountains, and neither better nor worse done than usual.

BOXING.

I.—HITTING OUT.

THE death of prize fighting may be found to be the birth of the future of boxing. Now that a healthier genius of opinion has struck their coarse and clumsy instrument of swindling from the hands of dog-fighters and convicts, a plea may be offered for the exercise and the art which it degraded, and a hope be held that popular antipathies may be no longer antagonistic to boxing. It is but due to prize-fighting, while banishing it even from the slums, for ever, to say that it fulfilled a certain mission. It defined the unwritten chivalry which regulated the duels of the poor and the unarmed in days when everybody, highest and lowest, made fighting the test of their principles. Fighting is brutal, inhuman. But fighting being universal, the next best thing, if its suppression be impossible, is a code of honourable restrictions and a curb on cowardly violence. To have banned the ugliness of passion, which originally accompanied the fights of wild Lancashire; to have drawn the broad lines of never hitting below the belt or inflicting injuries with other than closed fists, was the work of a true if ignoble chivalry, the essence of which is the appeal to generosity.

Boxing must, on its own merits, now that it is freed from the coarse associations which laid it under society's severest ban, take a prominent place among tactical and recreative exercises. The quickened but never exhaustive action of the lungs, the swift, light play of all the limbs, the impulse to the circulation, and the impetus to perspiration, which are its immediate effects, are produced by it, with a greater certainty and less violence than by any other exercise. At the same time there is added the keen animation of antagonism, the gradually heightened excitement of contest, warming with the gradually warming blood, until all physical energies, all thoughts, all desires are concentrated into one eagerness of enthusiasm. But tempering and guiding even this fusion of instincts, and faculties, and spirits must be a simultaneous instinct of wariness of defence. The pleasures of whist and chess arise from the combination of skilled calculation and direct antagonistic rivalry, which are purely mental. The fascinations of boxing are due to a skill and rivalry which are physical, and which absorb the intellect. Dash of attack, coolness of baffling defence, generosity of sympathies, a quick, instinctive eye, a swift arm, and a strong, alert leg are its requisites and its results, all to be pitted against those qualities and attributes in another. It allows no shrinking, no faintness of heart, no bad blood. At the same time it is the most comfortable, the freest of exercises. It does not demand the fatiguing and unnatural postures of fencing and singlestick, nor their cumbrous and oppressive panoply. A pair of padded gloves and the lightest of clothing satisfy its conditions. The brutalities of football or singlestick—and few know what brutalities these are and can be—are impossible. Given properly made and properly padded gloves, and no more than a temporary inconvenience may ever be laid to its charges, for boxing is a very different thing from fighting.

Such are the attractions of boxing, that in spite of its social ostracism, it is by far the most popular of tactical recreations, the most eagerly coveted of physical sciences. Hundreds attempt to learn it, but fail to master its elements and give up discouraged. There are few good boxers, especially among prize-fighters, fewer teachers, and absolutely none who understand the rationale of boxing. It has never been systematized or set down in rules. This is easily accounted for by the fact that of all tactical exercises boxing is by far the most difficult to learn. Its stages of acquisition are slow. The intricacies of fencing are much more easy to master. But, given a very small amount of physical aptitude, a certain amount of courage, and a great deal of unflagging patience, and anyone might in time make himself a good if not graceful boxer. The best proof of the general ignorance of the mere elements of the art may be found in so-called hand-books. One of the most popular gives incorrect advice in every particular of attack and defence on which it ventures to treat.

As the whole aim of boxing is to strike an adversary a good blow effectively, and without self-exposure to attack, this must be made the preliminary and essential consideration. The left hand is naturally employed. But the left arm is almost always the weakest; and at the outset it will be literally impossible to strike a straight, quick, effective blow with it. It may seem a strange assertion; but it is true. The blow will either be feeble, and fall short, or it will miss aim altogether—generally be a mere downward chop, or somehow be abortive. This arises as often from faults of position as from lack of strength or misjudgment. The first canon of boxing, then, is to hit out with the left hand, which must never be raised above the shoulder, or let fall to the waist. Continual practice of half-an-hour every day, alone, and say at a spot on the wall, for two or three weeks, will help towards this, accompanied by very quick, light dumb-bell practice. Patience must be supreme among virtues, for several months are sure to elapse before the arm is physically capable of hitting out vigourously and surely.

When the learner finds that he can hit a tolerably straight and correct blow, let him try with a teacher or friend. Face to face with him, he finds that he does not know how to stand in a proper position. The second canon of boxing is to keep just out of reach, and no more. A little practice will make the faculty of judging the right distance an instinct. Standing out of reach the learner delivers his blow. To get near enough to land it, he must step forward a few inches on one foot. He hits out. But the forward movement of the foot, the drawing back of the hand to the shoulder, both have betrayed his design. His teacher or friend may step back a few inches, and the blow falls short, while the hitter nearly overbalances forward, and cannot recover. The blow may be guarded. Or it may, and most probably will, pass over the opponent's left shoulder, who stands motionless and smiling. In any case he leaves himself completely exposed.

The secret of hitting straight is very simple when understood. It entirely depends on the left foot. The striker, in the act of delivering a blow, rests the whole weight of his body on his left foot. If this be turned inward, which in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it will be, the hand and arm go round and inward instead of straight forward. The left foot, then, must be kept pointed straight forward, just as in fencing, and as this is against nature, it will need much watchfulnes sand patience to cure the inward proneness. Again, the conformation of the arm gives a curvilinear and not a straight direction to the blow. The blow must, therefore, always be aimed at the right ear of the opponent. It will land somewhere near the nose.

But it is no use hitting at all unless it be done with a chance of success. The left foot must glide invisibly forward, and every art must be used to mask its advance. Should a chance present itself, simultaneously with the delivery of the blow, the body must go forward until the weight of it rests on the left foot. The hand must be shot out quick as the dart of a snake, lightly and easily as a bird taking wing. It will be astonishing to the learner how far, by simply moving his body forward and reaching out to the full extent of his arm without reaching over, he can mark his blow go. Then with a rapidity that permits not a moment's pause, he must draw back his arm to his body and his foot, no matter whether he have hit or missed or been baffled, until he recovers his first position. Technically, he must not dwell, but instantaneously recover. What the learner must repeatedly practise now if he can get a friend or teacher whom he can induce to take pains or have patience, is hitting out as described with his left continuously but not blindly whenever there is an opening, until exhaustion compels a rest. The waste of power must be disregarded. Not a step further should be taken until a fair amount of proficiency is acquired in this essential. All that the friend will have to do will be to stand firm, and guard the blows without flinching or hitting back, and to warn him continually against stepping in too far, against turning his foot in, against aiming anywhere but at the right ear, and against dwelling. The elbow must be held closely but loosely to the side, and the head kept erect and thrown well back.

These, however, are points for after consideration. Quick hitting with the left, and quicker recovery, must be the sole primary ambition.

Having mastered the elements, the learner may be gradually taught how to hold himself in position fronting his opponent. Mr. Compton, as Bob Acres, in *The Rivals*, will give him a good illustration of a bad position. Bob gets sideways to his work, the pistol hanging down, and shrinks timidly into as little as he can get. The boxer in position stands upright, and presents a full, honest front to his adversary. His left foot is, perhaps, a foot in advance of his right; on his left is poised his weight. His right is held loose and free, to step back upon. His chest is carried rather forward, and overhangs the belt slightly. The left arm is bent, the elbow near the side, the hand half way between the shoulder and the waist. The right is held motionless, the forearm laid diagonally across the chest, with the hand just over the left breast, ready to guard face or body. His eye is fixed steadily on his opponent's, betraying nothing, noting everything. His instincts seem to be on the watch for a motion that will indicate a design. And looking at him you would fancy it was impossible to land a blow on any part of him, so fully does he seem to cover himself. And almost impossible it would be, if he always defended, and never attacked.

The principles of defence, of attack, of countering, of feinting, of body-hitting, of hitting with the right, and many of the canons remain to be considered on an early occasion, many fallacies to be exposed, and warnings against error to be enforced. The termination now must be a little plain-dealing. Boxing cannot be learned in a month or three months. Much stiffness, a few headaches, and a great deal of awkwardness must be suffered for a time. Undisguisedly, the aspirant to boxing must be prepared to practice long with little result. He must be prepared to look and to feel ridiculous in his noviciate. But like many other ordeals, once passed through, this will repay the trouble, not only in the pleasures of practice, but in the consideration always paid by others to a good boxer.

THE MANCHESTER AUTUMN RACES.

FOR some undefinable reason, we have never been quite able to believe in the Manchester Autumn Races. Why, we cannot exactly say, as September is usually a fine month, and notably one in which the mares are at their best. Probably some old superstitions about races and Whitsuntide crowds, may have had something to do with our unbelieving state of mind, but the experience of last week has converted us into a sounder condition; and we are bound to admit that the races on the new course in September are, in such weather as we have lately had, a very enjoyable pastime.

The management having politely sent us a ticket for the grand stand, we availed ourselves of their courtesy, and on Saturday last, much to our own surprise, we found ourselves wending our way on foot to the racecourse at Mode Wheel. The approaches to the course, by way of Water Street and Regent Road, are by no means attractive. The latter Sahara-like thoroughfare has been lately sufficiently described in these columns, and we need not further dwell upon it. Chiefly is it remarkable for its multitudinous bricks and brick-kilns, dreary vistas of small houses, soldiers' barracks, cemeteries, and gasometers. The direct road to the course turns abruptly to the left at the Stowell Memorial Church, where the Reverend W. Doyle, floweryest of preachers, erst of St. Jude's, Ancoats; St. Saviour's, Chorlton-on-Medlock; St. Stephen's, Stockport Road; and Henshaw's Blind Asylum, Old Trafford; now airs his pulpit sentimentalisms every Sunday. A short descent brings one to the entrance to the course, behind the grand stand. The change from the wilderness of bricks and clay outside, to the green turf and champaign country, stretching towards Weaste and Eccles, is very agreeable; but the ground is so flat, and lies so low, that we had some difficulty in accurately defining our latitude, and it was not until we recognized the turrets of the Blind Asylum—those "distant spires and antique towers that crown the watery glade," that we could make out exactly where we were.

Suddenly there commenced a most infernal uproar and din, something like the tumult on the Paris Bourse, or in the gold market at New York, while the words, "I'll take hodds, I'll take hodds," were reiterated from hundreds of throats. One would think from the savage earnestness of the betting fraternity that they were about to assault each other. Mr. John Greaves, the Pontefract giant, however, takes things very coolly, and is surrounded by a goodly crowd, who appear to be cramming sovereigns into his capacious fists as fast as he can accommodate them. As he is about the height of an ordinary lamp-post, his customers have no difficulty in finding him at the conclusion of a race, and he meets his engagements with all the promptitude and punctuality of dividend-day at the bank. An ingenious better, who is about two yards less than Mr. Greaves, has adopted a singular plan of adding to his stature by putting on, or rather putting his feet into, a pair of pattens with cork soles at least a foot thick, which beat Mr. Charles Calvert's favourite high-heeled boots all to nothing. Amid the noise and shouting we felt ourselves somewhat confused at first, but, as we encountered such familiar faces as those of Sir Humphrey De Trafford, Mr. Robert Jefferies, Mr. Whitaker, Mr. "Cock" Robinson, ex-Mayor of Oldham, and other racing celebrities, we began to feel more at home. As we did not know one horse from another, and made no investments, the racing itself had no great interest for us.

It appeared to us that the favourites won, and John Osborne, steadiest of jockey's, lost all the races, except the last, which was won by an outsider; but Heaven help us, what an age we must be getting! There is Johnny Osborne, with big whiskers beginning to turn grey, and it seems but yesterday that we saw the beardless boy, overpowered by a grey horse which broke away over and over again, and after tearing round the Castle Irwell course two or three times, won the race after all. We must be getting as old as Methuselah, and here comes mine host of the F. H. Deansgate, of sporting notoriety, who looks positively younger than he did thirty years since. He must have been a hundred years of age when he was born, and is now rapidly developing backwards, into his teens. But what is the connection between betting, backing horses, bonifaces, and bottles? There seems to be some natural affinity between them, and yet mine host will invariably tell you that backing horses is a losing game, and will judiciously recommend you to keep your money in your pocket. In most cases, however, their precepts are better than their example.

There is a marked difference between the assemblages at the races in Whit-week and September. The crowd is much smaller in autumn than during the summer carnival. It differs also in this respect, that whereas at Whitsuntide, numbers attend the races who know and care little about racing itself, in September on the other hand, nearly every one present appears to be engrossed with the sport, and to care little about anything else. Before the commencement of a race, it appears to be the "correct card," to assume a very horsey attitude, and to inspect the animals with a knowing and professional air as they are paraded round the paddock. People with amazingly tight unmentionables, with solemn countenances incapable of smiles or laughter, with hats stuck on one side, take stock of the competitors, and look as wise as owls, or Mr. Jennings' pet jackdaw, of Smithy Door Market. The spectators are "all horse" together, and if you ask one of them a question, the probability is that you will be answered in a kind of snort or grunt, which has about as much significance, as the reply of the celebrated jackdaw of Rheims which said,—"What said he? Caw!"

TOWN TALK,
AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

MUNICIPAL PUGILISM.

IN these days of penny papers, it is peculiarly incumbent on a man not to make a fool of himself. If he happens to be a town councillor he should be additionally circumspect, for he may be sure that those objectionable reporters will give his folly every possible prominence. The unfeeling nature of the reporting tribe has often struck us. These gentlemen stolidly make public one's successes and one's failures—one day one's honours, and the next one's ignominies—with a heartlessness that makes one think their veins contain the blood of fishes rather than that of men. It is a fearful commentary on the ruthless justice of these long-haired persons that the same indifferent pencils should report the rhetoric of Mr. Councillor Greenwood in the civic parliament, and narrate how he, one day last week, ran out of his back

door and had a personal encounter with a damsel who was beating dirty carpets. We make no comment on this sorry exhibition of the consequence of losing one's temper. We only fear that Mr. Councillor Greenwood, at the next election, may lose something else.

POLICE SAGACITY.

We are always anxious to say something in favour of the police, but they never give us the opportunity. We are always averse to saying anything against the police, but they continually provoke us to do so. The Salford officials have just achieved a triumph in the art of not doing it. Three pickpockets were brought up, at the Salford Town Hall, on Saturday last, and on being removed from the police court to the cells, effected their several exits through two doors which stood conveniently open to the street upon the way. The force gave chase, and succeeded in recapturing two of them. The third got clear off. Is not this delicious? Once upon a time we resented the disrespectful treatment to which the police force is subjected by the pantomimists of the period. But sad experience has made us join the army of detractors. It is painful to us to adopt the course we are continually driven to take, but verily we have no option in the matter. We put it confidently to the community—Would anybody but a parcel of policemen have left those two doors open?

THE OMNIBUS TRAFFIC.

We note a decided increase of police vigilance—or, to speak correctly, we note the commencement of it, in the matter of this traffic. But the police go at it in too finikin a way. To have a good effect, a wholesale onslaught must be made. For instance, we do not see any difficulty in producing at the Police-court, on Monday morning, every guard upon the Cheadle route on Saturday afternoon. It only wants one man to calmly chalk the number of passengers and 'buses down, to bring about a score of fellows up before the magistrates. The only obstacle we can foresee is, the possible contingency of there not being any J.P.'s in attendance.

THE "LOVE CHASE" THIRTY-TWO YEARS AGO.

Sheridan Knowles's *Love Chase* was originally produced at the Haymarket Theatre, London, in October, 1837. Four months later it was played at the old Theatre Royal, in Fountain Street, from which it is evident that pantomime was not the sole winter theatrical amusement in Manchester thirty-two years ago. A correspondent has favoured us with the cast:—Sir Wm. Fondlove, Basil Baker; Wildrake, W. H. Bland; Trueworth, Stuart; Widow Green, Mrs. Clarke; Constance, Miss Faucit (afterwards Mrs. Bland); Lydia, Mrs. Baker. The date was January 8th, 1838.

THE CHIGNON MANUFACTURER.

For calm, cool impudence, no animal is equal to the female variety of the human genus. To a charge of over-working little girls, against the form of the Factory Acts, the mistress of a ramage manu—we mean, chignon manufactory—pleaded ignorance of the law. She could not understand the papers she had received upon the subject. The stipendiary adopted the good way of fining her £6, by way of impressing the law upon her memory. We shall be most happy to conduct her through the whole of the statutes at the same price each. Also, through the English dictionary, fully explaining the meaning of all obscure words, such as—humbug.

ADELINA PATTITES.

Surely the management of the Free Trade Hall might, by the exercise of a little ingenuity, contrive some means of obviating the lamentable waste of human time, and expenditure of human patience, attendant upon the forlorn endeavour to procure a good seat in the gallery, or "body of the hall" (as they ironically term a little coop at the far end). The spectacle of that unhappy crowd of human beings who wait in stolid agony an hour or more outside the doors in order to obtain the opportunity of waiting for another hour or more inside, is one to stir up in the hardest heart a feeling of commisseration. Indeed, we never feel that we have thoroughly enjoyed the possession of a ticket for the reserved seats unless we go and gloat over these miserable wretches, who are forced to come two hours, or three, before they get the chance of seeing anything. The amount of misery inflicted on the human race by Messrs. Forsyth, in admitting people to the Adelina Patti concerts one hour and a quarter—*one hour and a quarter*—before the commencement of proceedings, is incalculable. Yet what crowds of folks are willing thus to be insulted—thus to be informed that their time is of no importance whatsoever! What a crowd of folks are willing thus to be subjected to the most exasperating torture in human experience—namely, that of wanting time to fly more quickly even than it does. How anyone can preserve a vestige of self-respect, after spending two hours of his life in that ignoble manner, always puzzled us. Simon Stylites did the wretched thing for all his life. These Adelina Pattites differ from him only in degree. All madness is mad, but for the maddest of madnesses commend us to musical madness.

THE TWO IRVINGS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

Sir,—In your Town Talk of last Saturday you speak of an error committed by the *City News*, where it speaks of the death of a Mr. Joseph Irving, comedian, and you mention him as having performed in Boucicault's *After Dark* as near as you can recollect rightly. I was not in Manchester at the time of this performance, but I think I saw him perform in A. Halliday's play of *The Great City* at our Theatre Royal along with the Drury Lane Company. Perchance some of your numerous dramatic readers can inform me whether I am right. It is a pleasure to know that Mr. Henry Irving has not faded away, but still blooms along with *The Two Roses* at the Vaudeville in the Strand, a rather peculiar place for flowers to keep so fresh this autumn.—Yours theatrically and respectfully, W. POWNALL.

Jackfield, near Broseley, Salop, Sept. 20th.

A WORD FOR THE CITY MAGISTRATES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

Sir,—Several, indeed I may say many, of the City magistrates do not attend to their duties as they are bound to do, and yet there are a goodly number who do, and they getthe lion's share of the work in unhealthy Courts. As regards Monday last, you may be, and I believe are correct, but would have been more so if you had said that, at the opening of the Court, Mr. Headlam and Mr. Rickards were the only magistrates present. One other, I am informed, although not on the rotation list, did sit in the Bail Court, and disposed of all cases before that Court, and the number was large. You are, perhaps, aware, although many of your readers may not be so, that the stipendiary magistrate requires no assistance. He is legally empowered to deal with all cases in his Court, and by far the larger number heard in those below can be decided by one magistrate. Z.

23rd September, 1870.

THE LOVE CHASE.

IT is seldom that even the Haymarket Company put before their audience so great a treat as their magnificent performance of Sheridan Knowles's *Love Chase*. To Mr. and Mrs. Chippendale, to whom we are indebted for so much already, we are indebted for the introduction, on the occasion of their benefit, of this proud addition to the repertory of the company. To Mr. and Mrs. Chippendale we are indebted for their disinterestedness in bringing out a piece in which their own excellent portraitures are subordinate to the superb impersonations of Miss Robertson and Mr. Howe. Not only these, but other members of the company were well brought out. Miss Gwynne's pleasing and improving acting had a chance it never had before, and rose to the occasion. Altogether, the performance was emphatically the success of the present Haymarket Company as distinguished from the old one, in the days of Compton and of Farren. All the circumstances under which the comedy was produced were favourable. The night was a benefit night—the house was a full house—the play was a play which had never been acted here by the old company. But, best of all, it fitted most of the

performers to a marvel. Showing off Mr. and Mrs. Chippendale to advantage, it gave glorious scope to the artistic instincts, the tremendous spirits, and the splendid assurance of Miss Robertson, while Mr. Howe has never acted more effectively in any of his characters. Added to all which, it was produced before an audience that appreciated it. This happy conjunction of circumstances rendered the performance of *The Love Chase* worthy of being ranked with the old triumphs of the old performers.

It is a matter of wonder that the plays of Sheridan Knowles are not more frequently performed. It is not to be denied that, with his disagreeable affectation of the verbiage and turns of phrase of the Elizabethan dramatists, he did succeed in copying a large amount of their genius. The peculiar air of affectation which pervades his pieces is not so much a slavish imitation of their manner as the natural consequence of his appreciation of their spirit. It had made him love their little ways. His work is hardly that of genius. You can seldom put your finger on a line of his that strikes into your mind with the imperial flash. You meet with many short, sententious speeches, obviously written to become quotations, but extremely seldom with the sort of sentence that infallibly becomes a household word from its inherent soul. You feel as if the man were too much of a copyist to be a genuine genius, in the largest sense; yet, that he had a genius for the stage, there can be no denying. He unites to much of the sound sense and vigour of the old masters a knowledge of effect for which we look almost in vain in them. Although his numerous and straggling scenes are clumsiness itself compared with the few scenes, compact construction, and neat situations of our own more feeble but more finished writers, they are order and dramatic force compared with the grand barbarism of the older dramatists. Again, whilst he has copied all the virtues of his masters, he has carefully eschewed their vices. His plays are not disfigured by rude puns and coarse obscenities; but, on the other hand, he has a little fallen into "goodiness." His character of Trueworth, in *The Love Chase*, is a proof of this. What a loathsome lump of raw morality the very name is! And the same, the character. One loses patience with a man who holds up such a pattern for our admiration. And one loses patience with the man himself who gives up his own sweetheart to oblige his friend, and helps that friend to gain her. In this tone of mind one sees the germs of that morbid conscientiousness that ultimately turned poor Sheridan Knowles into a maudlin minister, and made him want to have burnt all the productions of his vigorous manhood. Oh, most doleful consummation? Fancy the man who could provide such players as Miss Robertson with such a part as Constance in this piece relapsing into a Baptist peacher. "Poor human nature!"

One of the most curious circumstances about this comedy is the almost entire absence of wit in its dialogue. And yet more interesting and enjoyable it hardly could be made. There is extremely little of that play upon ideas which makes parts of the *School for Scandal* blaze with brilliancy. It is all humour, straight-away fun, but kept "within the limits of becoming mirth." The relish with which audiences enjoy all pieces of this sort, the impetus with which they go, and the appetite for more which they excite as they proceed, induces us to doubt if wit is not too much relied on by the playwright. Wit is a French quality; humour is an English. Wit often lacks that spontaneity which is the essence of enjoyment. One can feel it coming. One can see it being led up to. This is the defect in that agreeable and very clever comedietta, *Uncle's Will*, by Mr. Smith, which Mr. and Mrs. Kendal have presented to us lately; but it is a fault which it divides with many of the masterpieces of the drama. It is a melancholy fact that wit palls, and in a very little time becomes a bore. One soon gets dazzled, dazed, and ultimately nauseated by the constant cut and thrust of repartee. Whilst nothing can be more enlivening and gratifying on occasion, and in moderation, we must think plain-sailing, good, old English humour is the stuff to make the body of a comedy. At least it must be always the most welcome, when there are such actresses as Miss Madge Robertson to give it boisterous life. It is perfectly obvious, from contemporary criticisms of the acting of this comedy, in its first few years, that the then representatives of Constance did not anything like equal Miss Madge Robertson's performance of the part. Exquisitely natural in its art, transporting in its animal spirits, and almost exciting in its headlong impetuosity—in the way in which it made the breathless audience wonder what on earth was coming next—we rank it with the Helen of Miss Ellen Terry in the *Hunchback*. If the company have any more surprises like this in store, let them be brought forth, and we will guarantee no more bare benches. All the signs of a complete success were there, the universal verdict being, "There's nothing like the old comedies!"

HINTS ON DRINKING.

BY OUR BON VIVANT.

"WHICH is the properest day to drink?" enquires the old catch, and answers it by naming all the days of the week in succession over and over again as often as you like to follow it up. And it is true to nature, for the desire or the necessity to imbibe something liquid recurs every day. Now, we profess temperance, but not total abstinence, and we are by no means fanatical in our belief or practice. We do not say conversely with the teetotallers that he, and all such are the enemies of the rest of the human race; and that the water-traffic ought to be surrounded by more stringent prohibitions, or, better still, abolished altogether. On the contrary, we say—by all means try and persuade all people of limited degrees of intelligence and powers of self-command to give up entirely the use of anything that they find disagrees with them or their pockets, whether it is beer, tobacco, gin, pastry, whisky, opium, unripe gooseberries, or rotten pears.

Whether beer was known to the ancients we don't know. Wine seems to have been—of a sort, or what they called wine—but it must have been more like the liqueur of modern times. It was kept in stone jars till it grew quite thick and gummy. They then mixed it with water, and one or two, or even more, perfumes, and sat swilling the nauseous stuff for hours. According to some of these poets, they occasionally get "screwed" with it, but it must have been the poetical imagination. Whether, however, the ancients were acquainted with beer or not, the moderns are. We believe there is not much doubt of that. And it is brewed in x's—not excess, good water-bibbing friend, but, unknown quantities. Here let us enter our protest against that abominable old fiction, "home-brewed." Home-brewed ale is, of course, ale brewed at home at a man's own house, for, in some country places, from difficulties of carriage, whoso wants decent beer must brew it for himself, and there are, here and there, invalids and people with delicate, or fanciful stomachs, who must have it of their own making. These, however, are small exceptions. Our objection is to the folly of people thinking that when they are sat at the Three Pigeons, drinking the ale brewed there, they are drinking home-brewed. It may be the Pigeons' home, but it is not that of the customer, or, at least, ought not to be. No, these people are just simply drinking brewers' ale, in a tap attached to the brewery. Home-brewed ale, in its literal sense, we take to be fast dying out. If a brewing failed occasionally, it was somehow persevered with, and the ale, so-called, drunk at until finished. "It tastes better than it looks," said our friend; "there isn't a headache in a gallon of it." "No," we replied, declining any more, "but there's a stomach-ache in every glass." The brewing of beer in those great establishments—the homes of our large landed proprietary—is still carried on, when the "heir's ale," brewed on the birth of an heir to the estate, is made stout and strong, and set to keep for twenty-one years, to be drunk on the coming of age festivities, and kept some of it as a rarity for years after. Of such is the "Morocco" of Levens Hall, near Kendal, and

the "goat's milk" at Powis Castle, mild and smooth as a glass of good old port, but so strong, that should the unwary visitor exceed one moderate tumbler, the first quarter of an hour in the open air afterwards will introduce several new views of the surrounding scenery to him, and make him think that the earth's surface possesses many strange qualities with which he was previously unacquainted, such as rising gently up in front of him, and hitting in the forehead.

But the ale of our daily life is none of these. For ordinary middle-class consumption, the produce of the large breweries of Burton and one or two more places, is gradually superseding all others. Considering how Manchester takes kindly to its beer of a morning, we hold that it is not well supplied with good ale. At those many smoking rooms between the London Road Station and Blackfriars' Bridge will they give the ordinary or regular customer a glass of sound Bass's bitter beer? Not if they know it. And yet they have the modesty to charge you threepence for it. Compare it, if you have the chance, to what you get under the same title at the best hotel in Dublin, we mean the Shelburne on Stephen's Green, at the same or a less price. The latter, as you perceive at once, is genuine. At almost any decent public-house in London, even at a vaults, or what is known here as such, you get Bass's genuine pale ale at twopence. It is too bad, Messieurs the Landlords; you get a good price and have a great sale, and you ought to supply the genuine article, but you don't.

Of porter or stout, which are both the same down here, though in London the latter is twice the strength and price of the former, we are rather old-fashioned, and go in for Reid's in London stout, and Guinness's Dublin. Nearly all the other London produce has a "doctor'd" taste about it, as if molasses and Spanish juice were largely associated with it. Mander's Dublin stout is the nearest approach to Reid's. The flavour of these corresponds somewhat to that of slightly dry sherry. You don't seem to wonder, on putting down the pewter, what you have been drinking. Guinness's doesn't compare with Reid's, but competes directly with it, on merits of its own. It is soft and creamy, and, though by no means deficient in strength, you always feel as if it were a matter that would bear repetition.

There is a good deal of beer drunk in a morning in Manchester; too much, perhaps, for the good of the folks' health, now and then, for the eleemosynary bread and cheese found in these rooms will not comfortably carry off more than a couple of glasses of beer, and it is by no means uncommon to take three, four, or even five. Now, although this may not directly produce intoxication, it has a certain "muzzy" tendency, and it indisposes the system to take to much solid food at dinner time as is requisite for an active man of business in sound health. As a supposed corrective of all this "blash," the "small gin" is resorted to, with bitters. If the Evil One could ever be supposed to have invented a drink that would scare man from drinking in future, it is, in our opinion, gin and bitters. It is considerably worse to the taste than any of the little physic it has been our fortune to have had administered to us, and its good effects, in any supposed direction, we take to be about *nil*. We would rather say, *begin* with your gin and bitters, for no one would, we suppose, drink much of it, and you can't very well drink beer after it.

Another morning tipple is the glass of sherry, and here Master Boniface comes out strong—in his own favour. Sixpence for a glass of sherry, of which there are thirteen to the ordinary wine bottle. However, as the quality is indifferent, lack of quantity is not much to be deplored. The British landlord, even if he be a foreigner, as so many now are, seems to have learned nothing from the revolution in the wine trade going on round him. He doesn't seem to know, though so many of his former customers now do, that a glass of sherry, better than his in quality, and two and a half times in quantity, can be had any minute of the day (except Sunday perhaps) at either the Almacen de Vinos, near the Exchange, or the Bodega, in Cross Street, for fourpence, and the same quantity of a wine, such as is kept at Boniface's for state occasions, for sixpence! A friend of ours, a regular frequenter of an hotel of high standing in Manchester, sought an interview with the landlord, and told him the wines belonging a late friend were to be sold the next day by auction, and as he knew what they were, and where they had been bought, he felt sure they were worth looking after; and, in fact, he had already himself taken as much as he wanted. "What prices do you think they will be likely to be sold at?" says Boniface. "Well, there's some very good port wine that I think ought to fetch about 75s." "My dear sir," rejoined mine host, with a shrug and a smile, "we never think of giving such prices as that."

But in taking in your sherry, by all means avoid, we pray you, taking sherry after or between other things. A moderate quantity of sherry, by itself, will do nobody any harm, either in the morning or at dinner; *or*, mind you, not *and*, at one or the other, but not at both: and above all, you mustn't mix your liquors; whatever you begin with, you must go on with, if you go on at all, but sherry, like an edged tool, however suitable for use, is dangerous to play with, and except you take care you will find that though you have appeared perfectly rational and sober to yourself and perhaps to others, you have been no more master of your own actions, though morally responsible for them, than you are of the events of a dream, and may thank your lucky stars if you have not perpetrated some wild and outrageous absurdity.

These remarks apply chiefly to the ordinary town life that we, our readers and we, have to lead. When a man is taking active exertion in the open air, pedestrianising, up in the moorlands sketching, or tramping over the stubble fields or moors after the birds, a "nip" or two, sundry nips, indeed, will do no harm; in fact, like the "bottel of beer, 'twill oft do him good" when he couldn't very conveniently lug the bottel or anything similar after him. And here, in spite of the song, we must enter our protest against bottled beer. Does anybody suppose that the red-diamonded or "bloody-hand"-ed bottles are full of bitter ale? Not they; there may be a light "residuum" of the genuine beer, but it has become almost a trade of itself to manufacture a light tasteless ale which shall mix with the genuine Bass, and a confiding and thirsty, but undiscerning public shall be thereby "sold again." And as to bottled porter, that is a nuisance which we think is gradually dying out. It is associated in our mind with the old coaching times, when men wore curly-brimmed hats and top boots, and eat huge half-done beefsteaks, and swore and fought cocks—Pierce Egan, and Tom and Jerry, in fact, the days when the Englishman gained the Godam Rosbif character in Paris, which has stuck tightly to every succeeding generation.

We had somewhat more to say about what to drink and when, but space warns us to conclude for the present. The rest we hope to say another day.

THE HAND-BELL RINGERS AT BELLE VUE.

OUR first impression, when out in the streets last Monday, was that the 'buses were having a good time of it. As to the horses thereof, that's another matter. But, after all, they are there to draw, and, as actors and opera singers are said to perform with greater spirit and excellence when the house is full, perhaps it's the same with the horses, and they enjoy drawing a well-filled vehicle. Early in the morning they began to troll past Ardwick Green, and from mid-day they were surging up in crowds. Three or four heavily-laden 'buses every hundred yards was the rule for most of the afternoon, and carts and traps and every sort of "convaniency" swelled the throng. "Our 'Bus-guard" did so well that he is now hesitating between spending a quiet week among the Newton Heath grounds, or laying out his "savings" on a long stake for the "Seizerwitch," which his favourite tipster has "given" him.

We caught a stray 'bus on our way to Market Street in the morning; not exactly a 'bus though, it was a nondescript affair, which looked as if some one had been trying to build a carriage out of National School desks and wire grating, and then put it on wheels, and tried, with a driver and guard, to give it as 'buslike an air as possible. Some of our readers may recognise in our description the "workmen's car" that travels now and then from the top of Market Street to All Saints' corner at penny fares. If you wish to attract public attention to yourself, just get on the outside seat for a trip, and we are mistaken if you won't have had enough of the public gaze before very long. We tried the outside at first, but were absolutely stared out of our place and took the inside, but as the thing has no back, nor sides, nor roof, the seclusion, even inside, is not great. On Monday last we offered the customary penny, but when we said we wished to go to Market Street, we were told the fare was twopence. We began to have considerable doubts as

to whether we should get that far, as the vehicle had only a light load, and the driver got so excited at seeing so many buses going to Belle Vue, either full or stopping every moment to pick up a group of half-a-dozen at once, that he pulled up every now and then and seemed more than half-inclined to turn round and go in for the Belle Vue trade. "How far are you going?" we asked of the guard. "Salford Station," he replied; "Belle Vue to Salford Station and back." On arriving at Portland Street, however, he was sorely tried. Passengers there were in plenty, and there were some 'buses that were shouting for Belle Vue, and others with a new cry—Peel Park! That decided him. Our vehicle stopped, and, by a common inspiration, both driver and guard at once began to vociferate "Peel Park! Peel Park!" till they were as black in the face as the pellucid rivulet that meanders by that classic grove. What dire offence we had committed, we knew not, that thus we should be made a spectacle for gods and men, and sitting in a nondescript vehicle in front of the Queen's Hotel, and be supposed to be anxious to be off to Peel Park, at eleven o'clock in the morning, with a crowd of excursionists! There was nothing for it but to "hook it," which we did.

The cause of all this excitement was, we found, the annual competition of bands of handbell-ringers at Belle Vue, which was to come off that day at one o'clock and afterwards. We first heard these bell-ringers at, we think, one of those miscellaneous exhibitions they used to have at the old Mechanics' Institution. They were called the Lancashire Bell-ringers, and afterwards went to America, where they were engaged by Barnum, dressed by him in a fancy costume, and called the Bell-ringers of Bohemia. To one of them remarking that if they were overheard people would find they weren't foreigners, Barnum replied, "Just go on talking Lancashire, as you have since you came here, and I'll bet nobody can tell a word any of you says." Which is one for the dialect! But they were professionals only, and rung for their dinners. Nevertheless, they left a crowd of admirers, who have carried on the practice of bell-ringing as amateurs, and now in many towns, not only of Lancashire and Yorkshire, but of Staffordshire and Shropshire as well, there are numbers who follow bell-ringing as a pastime and an elegant accomplishment.

There seems to be something in bell-ringing which engenders an emulative and competitive spirit. The poet informs us that while the bell goes a-ringing for Sarah the usually angelic temper of that young woman undergoes several modifications, but that may be because it is not she herself who rings, but is rung for, and her mind becomes, as the fair Ophelia's, like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh. But if you are the ringer yourself, and manage so far to agree with other ringers as to ring a tune together, your sense of self-satisfaction is so great that you become ready to aver that your own particular company or "band," as it is called now, is, as every man says of his own dog, the best in all England. Out of this feeling spring challenges, and so friendly competitions have been arranged, and in such wise that what is a meeting of the ringers is also an attraction to the public. The astute proprietors of the Belle Vue Gardens have not been slow to perceive this, and have accordingly invited the Bands of Bell-ringers from all parts to come free by Railway to Belle Vue, and hold their annual contest there, promising four money prizes of £14, £7, £4, and £2, to those bands who should be selected by independent judges, to be the first, second, and so on, in order of merit.

Making our way then to Belle Vue as best we might, we found a considerable number of people wandering in the gardens, and a large crowd of lads and lasses dancing on the open air platform, with a still larger crowd looking on. Our interest was not with these; bella, horrida bella, we had left behind, we hoped, for more peaceful contests, and we sought the large room and struggled through the people-incumbered doorway, to meet with a still larger crowd than ever. But here was the ringing. In the orchestra was a large table covered with crimson cloth and around this stood a company ringing hand-bells, of various sizes, generally one in each hand, and every moment putting down one bell with a peculiar quietness that is only acquired by practice and taking up another. Among the fourteen bands that played on this afternoon there were several degrees of excellence. To hear one, you would think, well, that has'nt much chance, after another that you have just previously heard; to which you would perhaps have no hesitation in awarding the first prize. Then comes another which unquestionably throws everything into the shade that had preceded it, and is itself eclipsed by its successor. Each of these bands had to play one piece of its own selection which it had not played at any one of the fifteen previous contests at Bell Vue; and the name of the piece and by whom composed and arranged, had to be sent in a week before the performance; a copy of it also, for the music is regularly arranged in score, had to be supplied on the morning of the contest for the use of the Judges, who, this time, were Mr. Delavanti, the musical director at Madame Tussaud's exhibition in London, and Messrs. J. Goodwin and Wm. Simpson, professors of music in Manchester.

After getting out of the mysterious awe with which we have always regarded the name of the poet Shelly we have rather associated the word in some connection with terms of depreciation or disparagement, but it seems that there is a place of that name near Huddersfield which is great in music—not the music of the shell, exactly. If one had been living at the close of the last glacial period (see British Association, generally), one, perhaps, might there have heard "Mermaid Triton blow his wreathed horn;" but it is that of the

> Bells, Bells, Bells,
> The tintinnabulation of the Bells.

What should you think of a selection from Haydn's first grand symphony being played—rung, or chimed, we ought, perhaps, to say—on hand-bells, by a set of young men from a Yorkshire village? Yet they played it well—marvellously well, though, as it seemed, with no little exertion. The players used eighty-four bells in playing this selection; and you could see them all the time put down one, take up another rapidly, give it a shake, and again exchange it for another. As there were nine ringers in the band, there was, of course, an average of nine bells to each, but there would be, no doubt, some who would employ above the average, and the bells were of all sizes, from the diminutive little parlour-bell to the size of a small chimney-pot.

After all the bands had played, the decision came out. Shelley first, and numbers two, eight, and thirteen—that is, the bands of Scarborough, of the Elland Campanalogian and the Leeds United, were to play their pieces over again, for the satisfaction of the judges. By this time, however, it had turned five o'clock, and these Campana-what's-his-name-ists were scattered over the face of the earth, so we wandered about for a change. The large room adjoining the bar was full, and scarce a seat to be had. The Chinese Tea-room adjoining was full also, and the next room, as large as it was, crowded too. So we sallied forth. The platform we found to be more crowded than ever, and though the band in the Pagoda blew its best, there was but little dancing, for there was little room for the dancers. The embankment just above it was crowded with spectators. There were people dancing, with their accompanying crowd, on the level floor behind the Pagoda, all the way up to the green alcoves near the lions' den. In search of room, we went up to the lake. There, both the steamers and all the boats were crowded, and another crowd looking on. The Velocipedion was full, and banging away like an express train, and another crowd looking on and waiting for its turn. Crowds in short everywhere; so we returned in despair to the crowd we had left, and presently the bands assembled. The Ellanders and the Scarborough repeated their different versions or arrangements of "The Heavens are telling," from *The Creation*, and the Leeds United again showed us what bell-ringing could do for an Overture of Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algieri*. The Shelley band, who took the first prize here last year, and the year before as well, played this overture for their piece two years ago. From the light festive character of the music, we should fancy it well suited to this sort of an orchestra. It is full of airy trills and roulades, abounding in rapid passages and false leadings-up to endings which it only, in one instance reaches, and the slight shrillness, the inevitable accompaniment of the bells, accorded with the sparkling, rippling nature of the composition. The Hyde band, with the magnificent "Gloria in Excelsis" from Mozart's 12th Mass, had it seems satisfied the judges of its right to the second prize, and the Elland was considered by them to have surpassed the Scarborough. So there was nothing, therefore, but to decree the fourth prize to the Leeds United, and we think they quite deserved it. To say more would perhaps be taken to question the judge's decisions, which we have no intention whatever of doing. The Madeley band played Strauss's "Cachucha" very nicely indeed, and we were much pleased with the performance by the Dewsbury band of the old air, "In my cottage near a wood," with variations. One of the variations was taken rather too quick, we thought, but probably the members are not accustomed to practising in so large a room as the one in Belle Vue.

On the whole, we spent an interesting afternoon. It does not, perhaps advance the cause of science, this bell-ringing, but it is a quiet, homely occupation, inexpensive, and of a certain encouragement to the study of music, though not an end in itself; and after all, as a ringer there, unconsciously translating freely an old French proverb, observed to us, "one must take a fancy for summat!"

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	a. m.				
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Oldham (Clegg-st.) ,,	9 2				
Stalybridge ,,	8 50				
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Dukinfield . ,,	8 56				
Hayfield .. ,,	8 40	12/	6/	15/	7/6
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Marple .... ,,	8 57				
Stockport .... ,,	9 45				
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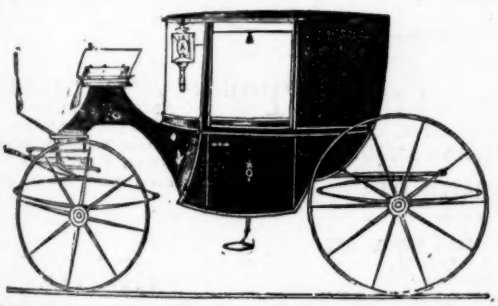

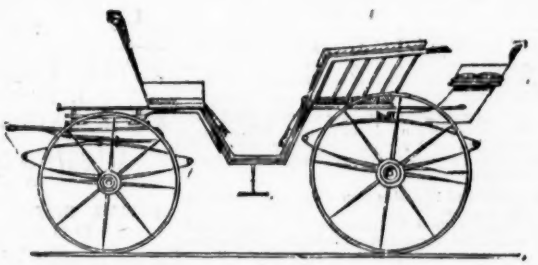

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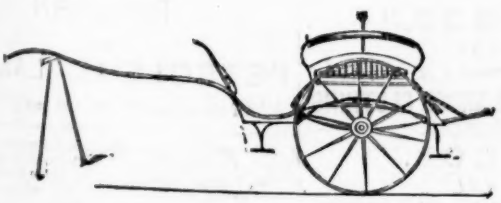

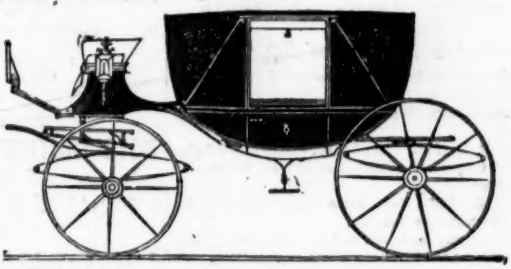

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